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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Extension Service, WASHINGTON 25, D.C.



VICTORY FARM VOLUNTEERS

April 8, 1946

For your information

TO ALL ASSISTANT STATE FARM LABOR SUPERVISORS, VFV:

Subject: News Letter

1946 LOOKS LIKE THIS...

The fieldmen from our farm labor Recruitment and Placement Division were here the other day. I guess you know them--C. C. Randall, Clint Gaylord, John Henler, and John Hervey. Only Pittman was missing. We were all talking about the VFV program, and I noted that the men were fairly optimistic about the success of the youth program this year. Since they represent every section of the country, this was a pretty good sign.

Their report indicated that great numbers of boys and girls would be needed again and that sound plans are being laid for recruiting them in most of the States.. Although not so many States have State VFV supervisors this year, youth will be recruited for farm work just as before. In California, for instance, where there is no VFV program, as such, in 1946, they're going to use great numbers of youth for day-hauls. California will have no youth camps, Gaylord told us. But he thinks they'll get out as many day-haul youth as are available.

What Randall had to say was interesting to me. "I'm not worried about '46," he commented. "We've got momentum. Everybody's interested in the food situation. But I am concerned about the transition period--next year and the next. I'm just wondering what's going to happen to this youth program then."

LET'S TAKE A BROAD VIEW

We've been doing a lot of wondering about what the various State extension services do have in mind beyond 1946. Current farm labor programs have kept us all pretty busy throughout the war, and there never seems to be much time for planning into the future. But unless some thought is given to the problem now, we may find ourselves without a program for continuing these values derived by both city youth and by farmers.

Your own opinion probably depends on your conception of Extension's responsibility. If one takes a broad view of Extension's job it would include a program for improving on every hand the relationships between rural and urban peoples.

The broad view would recognize that too many youth day-hauls all over the country leave something to be desired, that Extension has a responsibility to the farmer as well as the boys and girls to see that day-hauls are operated on higher levels. The broad view would take into account the increasing percentage of urban residents without farm background and little or no understanding of farm problems. It would recognize everybody's responsibility for all

the Nation's youth and the fact that boys and girls are actually the best type of labor for some agricultural work.

IDEA DEPARTMENT

Isn't there a need for some detailed studies of the VFV program? Has anyone in your State thought about a survey that would give us pertinent answers about the values of the program? I have in mind a large number of interviews--with parents, with youth, with school officials, teachers, county extension people, farmers and foremen--perhaps a series of tests for youth who have done farm work. Of course, such a job would have to be done thoroughly and scientifically. Otherwise it wouldn't have much value.

COMING YOUR WAY...

Along the line of Extension responsibility and policy, you'll be interested in the mimeographed copy of Pennsylvania

Director J. M. Fry's discussion of the VFV program at the Baltimore regional conference. We're sending copies to VFV supervisors, and Meredith C. Wilson is sending them to directors.

GOOD SELLING POINT

All signs point to the fact that VFV's will be a little older this year than during the war. Older, huskier boys who

have been in industrial plants or even in corner drug stores are being replaced in many areas by returning GI's. If this is true in your State you're bound to be able to recruit bigger boys for farm work this year. And that's a good selling point when you're suggesting answers to a farmer's labor problem.

VFV-4-H CLUB COOPERATION

W. L. Brannon has enlisted his State 4-H Club staff in getting the VFV program under way in South Carolina this spring.

Meeting with the State staff, Brannon found the district club agents willing to help. These agents will work closely with the county labor assistants on the youth phase of the program. As a matter of fact, when county labor people met the first of April for regional State conferences they heard their district club agent discuss "Youth's Part in a Farm Labor Program."

To carry this cooperation further, a special edition of The Carolina Club Boy, State 4-H Club paper, will be published this month featuring youth in the 1946 labor program. Fifteen thousand copies will go to schools throughout the State. This kind of cooperation, it seems to me, will make for stronger ties between city and rural youngsters, and we could certainly do with more of that.

OFF THE PRESS IN VERMONT

Speaking of newspapers, Mrs. Buttrick has put out her first edition of The Vermont Victory Farm Volunteer. And it's a good

edition too. It goes, we understand, to veteran VFV's and plays a big part in early recruiting--a long-distance job in Vermont, where most of the live-ins are out-of-State youth.

Feature story on the front page gets this headline--"1945 Is Best Year in Every Way for Victory Farm Volunteer Program." Not only were there more volunteers placed last summer than in the three previous years, the story reports, but the proportion of those who made good on their jobs was larger. Only 10 percent of the volunteers were failures last year, as compared with 21 percent in 1942.

WELCOME TO VFV!

There are some new folks in the ranks of those handling the youth phase of farm labor this year and of course we want to welcome all of them. In Idaho, D. T. Bolingbroke is new to the VFV program. And in Massachusetts, L. L. Derby will handle youth along with farm labor information. In Utah, Karl E. Ward has joined the program, and in West Virginia, as we told you in the last news letter, C. P. Dorsey is back on the job.

State farm labor supervisors who'll be handling the youth program as a new branch of activity are John J. McElroy, California; Harold L. Dusenberry, Montana; Orren Beaty, New Mexico; D. A. Tucker, Virginia; and Arthur F. Kulin, Washington. If we've missed some of the new people it's because we haven't heard from all the States.

GOOD ADVICE FROM NORTH DAKOTA

A quotation from our friend Herbison, North Dakota's farm labor supervisor, always makes good reading--and here's what he says to the county farm labor people in a recent news letter.

"Of several summer jobs adapted particularly to older school youth, that of assisting in detasseling of hybrid seed corn is one in which 'older girls with some size and stick-to-itiveness' can be of great help....The time to make contacts for prospective crews is well before school lets out. (Herbison's underlines but I'd underline it too.)....In 1946, we can save a lot of trouble for employers and disillusioned small fry if we'll go to schools and lay the job qualifications right on the line, do close preliminary screening of volunteers, and proceed to train and organize crew members with what it takes to do the job." Those are my underlines. This sounds like good advice that applies in all the States where youth do corn detasseling--or any other jobs.

ABOUT THE RECRUITING POSTER

Orders from all but four States are now in for our recruiting poster, "We're Needed Again." Orders now total 28,700. That includes a request for 6,000 from Mississippi, 2,000 from Hawaii, and 1,800 from South Carolina. By the way, your orders for this poster can still be increased if you think additional copies are needed. We've been promised the posters will be ready for shipment from Baltimore April 25.

A FLORIDA REACTION

It's a mighty interesting article in which The Journal of the Florida Education Association tells about the Florida VFV's in Connecticut. The article takes up 7½ pages, including several pages of pictures. These sentences taken from the editor's introduction are significant as expressing an educator's point of view:

"The thrilling story of this 1945 profitable, meaningful 'work experience' for this army of Florida high school students and teachers tells itself on the following pages. Whether or not future labor needs will encourage its repetition on such a large scale is not known but it is safe to say that as a result of this happy venture, some type of work experience for vacation months will be recommended as a page in Florida's school curriculum." (My underlines again.)

OREGON TRENDS

Russ Adams writes from Oregon that "there appear to be some very definite trends developing, indicating an even greater need for youth during the 1946 season in this State than was earlier anticipated."

He attributes this need to the lack of assurance of Mexican labor and increased acreages in intensive crops, especially strawberries. One strawberry grower has already placed his order for 100 pickers, all youth except the supervisors.

Adams adds this item which may give some pointers for you folks in other States-- in two counties where the acreage of hand-harvested crops is being increased, Oregon hopes to recruit large numbers of college young people, including some returning soldiers and their wives. These young people might well be over 18, of course. Along with being a fine source of labor, it seems to me that college students are also a good idea for supervisors of younger boys and girls.

YES, THERE WILL BE INSURANCE

will be available again this year.

If you didn't happen to note the paragraph in our last news letter about VFV insurance for 1946, here's another reminder that it

The Health and Accident Underwriters Conference is printing a supply of application forms which will be sent out from the conference headquarters in Chicago. VFV supervisors have probably gotten my letter asking for the number of forms needed. Some of you have asked whether the same companies will issue the policy as before. We're checking on that matter and will soon let you know what we find.

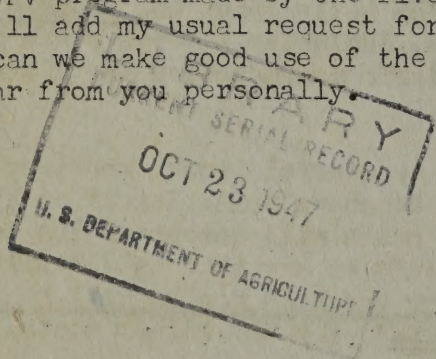
COLORADO SUGGESTIONS

In summing up the discussion of Colorado's prospective youth program for 1946 at the State Extension Conference, A. J. Hamman points out that "the proper selection of youth in the beginning and their placement with the right kind of employers and on jobs they are capable of doing are fundamental."

APPROACH THROUGH VO-AG IN KANSAS

We hear from Kansas that one approach to the farm labor problem in 1946 will be through the vocational agriculture shops, young farmer classes in school shops, "or any good shop interested in building labor-saving short cuts and repairing farm machinery." W. O. Stark, of the State staff, will assist the vo-ag departments, farmers, or boys in getting information for construction of such projects.

You'll soon be getting mimeographed copies of the recommendations concerning the 1946 VFV program made by the five VFV supervisors who met here in January.... And I'll add my usual request for news about your activities in the States. Not only can we make good use of the information you send us, but it's a pleasure to hear from you personally.



Sincerely yours,

Irvin H. Schmitt

Irvin H. Schmitt, Chief
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Extension Farm Labor Program

(Copy to directors, editors,
State supervisors)